

Modern European History
Wednesdays, 10:30-1:20

Academic Year	2025-26	Semester	2
Course Coordinator	Dr Jennifer Cash		
Office Location	SHHK-05-16		
Phone	Teams/6592 3771		
Email	Jennifer.cash@ntu.edu.sg		
Course Code	HH2006		
Course Title	Modern European History		
Pre-requisites	HH1001 What is History?		
No of AUs	3		
Contact Hours	39 (weekly seminars)		
Office Hours	Wednesdays 3-4 p.m or by appointment		

Course Description

This course introduces students to key themes in the social, political, and cultural history of Europe from the French Revolution to the twenty-first century. Our discussions will be framed by questioning the very terms of “modern” and “Europe”. We will follow the historical trajectory outlined during the mid-twentieth century for approaching “modern European history” as a developmental trajectory shared across Western Europe towards societies characterized by democracy, nation-states, industrial development, and universal equality (sex, gender, race, etc.), among other characteristics.

This narrative has always been subject to question because of the entanglements between these “progressive” elements of “modernity” with other trends such as imperialism, slavery, Fascism, genocide, and the Holocaust; as well as Communism. However, from our triple vantage point at NTU (twenty-first century, Singapore, Asia) the narrative deserves even deeper questioning. That’s what we will do, even as we learn about the main events and how they have been identified, assessed, remembered, and forgotten by historians, intellectuals, and “popular” audiences.

A Note on the Readings: Most readings are available in e-format through NTULearn. A few will be on physical reserves or in the stacks. Those marked with (*) will form the primary basis for class discussion, but you should draw on the other sources, too, in assignments (especially the mid-term essay and final exam). Changes to readings will be announced at least one week in advance.

Week-by-Week

****Please come prepared for a mix of discussion and in-class activities, lest we all be bored by an over-reliance on lectures.****

****Complete the readings before class on the week that they are assigned. (Except for Week 1).****

Wk 1 (14 Jan) Introduction: What, When, and Why is “Modern” “Europe”?

Geographical imaginations. Major events from the Fall of Rome until the French Revolution. Europe’s shift from the Mediterranean to the North Atlantic. Questions of periodization; of the role of history; and of the nature(s) of time and agency.

Readings:

*Bassin, Mark, “Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space,” *Slavic Review*, 1991, vol. 50, no. 1, pp 1-17.

*Zerubavel, Eviatar, “Language and Memory: ‘Pre-Columbian’ America and the Social Logic of Periodization,” *Social Research*, 1998, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 315-330.

Hunt, Lynn, Martin, Thomas, Rosenwein, Barbara R. Po-Chia Hsia and Smith, Bonnie. *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*.

Wk 2 (21 Jan) Enlightenment and Revolution: 18th C Europe

Political, Social, Religious Orders at the 18th C. Bureaucratic and administrative changes of statecraft. “Public intellectuals”. Economic & Social Histories.

Readings:

*Jacob, Margaret C. *The Secular Enlightenment*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2019. **All Read:** Chapter 1 (Space); Chapter 2 (Time); Chapter 3 (Secular Lives); Chapter 8 (1790s). **Six groups of approx. 5 students:** each with one of the remaining chapters – A (All pieces, Front and Back Matter, except Notes); B (Ch. 4 Paris); C (Ch. 5 Scotland); D (Ch. 6 Berlin/Vienna); E (Ch. 7 Naples/Milan); F (Prologue, Epilogue, Notes)

*Thompson, E.P. “The Moral Economy of an English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, 1971, 50(1): 76-136.

Tricoire, Damien, “La cité de Dieu des patriotes: La pensée théocratique des Lumières et les origines religieuses de la Révolution française,” *French Historical Studies*, 2023, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 393-425.

Cobban, Alfred. *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Wk 3 (28 Jan) Salon #1: The Long 19th Century Begins

Enlightenment legacies in social life.

Readings:

What is/was a salon?: <https://thesalonhost.com>

*Chesney, Duncan McColl, “The History of the History of the Salon,” *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 2007-08, Vol. 36, No. 1-2, pp. 94-108.

***Balzac, Another Study of Woman:** <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1714>

Forster, Robert, "The Survival of the Nobility during the French Revolution," *Past & Present*, 1967, No. 37, pp. 71-86. (Can follow the trail: Alfred Cobban published a rejoinder; then Forster another)

Beck, Thomas, "The French Revolution and the Nobility: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Social History*, 1981, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 219-233.

Wk 4 (4 Feb) Industrial, Social & Political Revolutions

Urban/rural relations; Capital; Progress and Poverty; [How] do class and gender matter?; 1848

Readings:

*Gerhard, Ute and Valentine Meunier, "Civil Law and Gender in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Clio: Women, Gender, History*, 2016, NO. 43, pp. 250-275.

*Allen, Robert C., "Tracking the Agricultural Revolution in England," *The Economic History Review* (New Series), 1999, Vol. 52, No. 2, pp. 209-235.

*Thompson, E. P. "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism" *Past & Present* 1967, 38(1): 56-97.

Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. *The Communist Manifesto*. (Any edition) All 4 sections (about 40 pages): "Bourgeois and Proletarians"; "Proletarians and Communists"; "Socialist and Communist Literature"; "Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties", plus any front/back matter you want to read

Wk 5 (11 Feb) Nations before Nationalism (Europe beyond England and France)

Commonalities and differences in the social, political, and economic challenges across Europe in the mid-19th C. The "Agrarian Problem(s)" as well as the Industrial Revolution

Readings:

*Hobsbawm, E. J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022 [1990]. All chapters are important; chs. 3 and 4 are especially so.

*Hitchins, Keith, "Romania," *The American Historical Review*, 1992, Vol. 97, No. 4, pp. 1064-1083.

Essays due (Vivas scheduled for Week 13): **Friday 13 February 23:59**

Wk 6 (18 Feb) – CNY Holiday: Asynchronous Salons

Europeans at Home and Away: Material Entanglements of Imperialism, Colonialism, Nationalism

Readings:

*Said, Edward, "Jane Austen and Empire," Ch. 2, Part II, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage 1994, pp. 80-96.

Selections, Austen, *Mansfield Park* <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/141/141-h/141-h.htm>

Wk 7 (25 Feb) *La Belle Époque, Le Fin de Siècle*; the End of History, part I

“Parises” and National Intelligentsia

Beginning the Book Review: Pros and Cons of GAI

RECESS WEEK

Wk 8 (11 Mar) The Great War/WW I

Readings:

*Marks, Sally, “Mistakes and Myths: The Allies, Germany, and the Versailles Treaty, 1918-1921”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Sept 2013, Vol. 85, pp. 632-59.

*Kidd, Colin, et al., “Is it the Duty of Historians to Correct National Mythologies?,” *History Today*, 2019, pp. 8-10.

Film:

Marie, Queen of Romania (2019)

Wk 9 (18 Mar): National Self-Determination: Class Presentations

(Format of presentations will be the post-war settlements: what are your nation’s grievances, proposed solutions, etc.; this multiplicity of perspectives and grievances is more central to the historiography than a construction of a singular narrative with key dates)

Wk 10 (25 Mar) Russian Revolution(s) and the Great Soviet Experiment

How to explain the “European” connections/impacts? Was it another French Revolution? Weighing the elements of war, policy, and spectacle in the early Soviet Union.

Readings:

* Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. *The Communist Manifesto*. (Any edition) All 4 sections (about 40 pages; see Week 3).

*Fitzpatrick, Sheila, *The Russian Revolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017 [1982].

*Fitzpatrick, Sheila. “Celebrating (or Not) the Russian Revolution.” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2017, pp. 816-831.

Kelly, Catriona, review of *Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938* and *Life has become more Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 74, No. 4, December 2002, pp. 921-924.

McAuley, Mary, review of *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society – The Soviet Case*. *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 56, No. 2, June 1983, pp. 385-387.

Wk 11 (1 Apr)

“Multiple Modernities” Early-Mid 20th C Political and Social Ideologies: Spanish Civil War, Italian Fascism, National Socialism(s)...

Against common world narratives dominated by the two World Wars and the Russian Revolution, the memory and reconstruction of many other struggles across Europe is a more complex undertaking.

Film: *The Teacher who Promised the Sea* (2023)

Discussion: AI, Data, and the Digitalization of Memory

Book review due

Wk 12 (8 April)

World War II, the Holocaust, and Other Genocides

Additional on Balkan Wars, population transfers; Yugoslav wars

Fast-Forward: Ongoing controversies about assessment, responsibility; Retributions, Public debates, Textbooks, and Memorialization

Readings:

*Snyder, Timothy, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York: Basic, 2022 [2010]. Group 1: Chs. 7, 8, 9; Group 2: Chs. 1, 2, 3; Group 3: Chs. 4, 5, 6.

Snyder, Timothy, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York: Basic, 2022 [2010]. Conclusion and Afterword.

Wk 13 (15 April) Europe Divided and United

Commonalities and Differences in the Cold War period and after

Readings:

*Judt, Tony, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*. London: Vintage Books, 2010 [2005], Selections t.b.d.

*Fukuyama, “End of History”

Essay Viva – in Class

EXAM: Wednesday 29 April, 9-11:30

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you (as a student) will be able to:

- 1) Identify and interpret major events in modern European history.
- 2) Evaluate key scholarly debates in modern European history.
- 3) Integrate a range of sources and information (from novels to statistics) into historical arguments.
- 4) Explain and evaluate how political, cultural and ideological arguments about the past continue to shape Europe's present.

Course Content

- Political, cultural and social histories of Europe
- Key methods, concepts and theories of European historiography
- Use of fiction and imaginative sources in historical argument, knowledge and understanding
- Development of original, comparative, historical arguments

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	Course LO Tested	Related Programme LO or Graduate Attributes (See History Programme's LOs)	Weighting	Team/ Individual	Assessment Rubrics (See History Programme's assessment rubrics)
1. Essay	1, 2, 3, 4	3, 5, 9, 10, 11	25%	Individual	2, 3, 6, 7
2. Book review	1, 3	3, 4, 6, 10	15%	Individual	3, 4, 5, 14
3. In-class presentation	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 5, 6	20%	Team + Individual	3, 4, 7, 11, 13
4. Exam	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10	40%	Individual	2, 3, 7, 9
Total			100%		

Essay – 25%: [15% Take-home + 10% In-Class Viva/Discussion]

The mid-term is a comparative essay on given themes and questions (for instance class, industrialisation, gender, religion or politics) with reference to course readings and discussions.

****GAI discouraged; Use must be declared and papertrail provided.****

Book review – 15%:

The development of a reading public and widespread literacy are considered key components of the modern period that enabled a number of new social and political forces. But how did these dynamics play out? Throughout the course we will take a close look into one or more novel(s) that have been considered quintessential commentaries on European history either/both at the time

of their appearance or by later generations. The review should focus on how historical narratives are constructed, received, and changed in the dynamic relationship between writers and audiences: when/how is a novel a good historical source? When is it not? How can you tell?

****Scaffolded assignment; GAI permitted at some stages. Declaration and papertrail required.****

In-class presentation – 20%: (10% Content + 10% Presentation/Discussion)

The aim of the class presentation is to facilitate research on specific national (and possibly ethnic/sub-national) histories to complement and complete the ‘great’, sweeping narratives of modern European history that we do in class.

The presentation should be based on a written submission that your group has composed; it should take the form of presenting your selected nation’s demands at the time of the Paris Peace Settlements (you are not restricted to the actual demands that were advanced and in some cases the nation may not have been represented/recognized at that time [e.g. Roma], but the demands should be plausible). More details to follow.

Slides are not required for this presentation, but may be used. Phones/laptops/tablets should not be used for reading prompts, unless discussed with the instructor beforehand. This is to underscore awareness of the mnemonic and preparatory practices related to oral presentation in the early 20th century; however, individual student concerns may be taken into consideration.

****Any intended GAI use must be discussed and agreed in advance with instructor.****

“To do well on the team assessment, it is necessary for you to demonstrate positive interdependence and teamwork. In principle, you will receive the same marks as your team. However, your individual score may vary based on feedback about your contributions to the group project”

Exam – 40%:

The final exam assesses your ability to formulate historical interpretation of the themes of the course as a whole.

Formative feedback

You will receive formative feedback through written responses to the essay and book review. You will also receive verbal feedback through in-class discussion, including tutorials. You will receive the summative faculty feedback on the exam following the conclusion of the module.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

General

You are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all seminar classes punctually, participate fully, and take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates.

Absenteeism

Absence from class can affect your overall course grade. For all valid absences, please request a short-term leave of absence from your home school. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate or participation in NTU’s approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

Please notify the instructor in advance of valid absences whenever possible.

You should take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for any missed seminar sessions.

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Generative AI: The appropriate use(s) of ChatGPT, Bard, Dal-E, Grammarly, and other similar Generative AI resources will be discussed and stipulated throughout the semester in the context of individual assignments. This course relies on a high degree of take-home written work. Therefore signed declarations of GAI use will be required for each take-home assignment. Failure to submit a declaration; inaccurate declaration; lack of an appropriate papertrail; and/or other evidence of GAI mis-use will be treated as serious breaches of academic integrity.